

Summary of Temporary Ordinance related to new construction, demolition and relocation of historic structures in a historic district

The City is developing amendments to the Historic Preservation Ordinance in an effort to strengthen the ordinance.

City Council approved an ordinance Wednesday, June 9, 2010, temporarily discontinuing the issuance of a 90-day waiver certificate for demolitions, relocations and new construction in City of Houston Historic Districts when a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is denied by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC). The ordinance included language that allows the issuance of a 90-day waiver certificate for new construction where the applicant has demonstrated the expenditure of funds in preparation of construction by entering into a contract with and paying money to an architect or builder, or otherwise expending funds on such items as a survey, soils test, clearing or other related improvement to the property prior to the passage of the ordinance. The property owner may appeal a denial of a COA to the Houston Planning Commission. If the HAHC approves a COA for demolition, relocation or new construction, the project may move forward. During this period, applications for the designation of historic districts will not be accepted. The discontinuation applies until the historic preservation ordinance is amended or December 31, 2010, whichever is earlier. The discontinuance does not effect existing provisions for applications for a COA for the alteration, rehabilitation, or restoration related to existing buildings within designated Historic Districts and for individual landmarks and protected landmarks outside the boundaries of designated Historic Districts.

Community meetings are planned this summer for comments on amendments to the Historic Preservation Ordinance. In addition, public hearings will be held by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission, Houston Planning Commission and City Council Committee on Development and Regulatory Affairs before consideration by City Council.